

**Amendments to the Claims:**

A clean version of the entire set of pending claims is submitted herewith per 37 CFR 1.121(c)(3). This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

**Listing of Claims:**

1-5. (Canceled) A contrast agent comprising solid metal nano-particles having an acoustic impedance above  $35 \cdot 10^5 \text{ g/cm}^2\text{s}$ .

6. (Original) ~~The contrast agent of claim 1~~ A contrast agent comprising solid metal nano-particles having an acoustic impedance above  $35 \cdot 10^5 \text{ g/cm}^2\text{s}$ , wherein said metal is selected from the group consisting of gold, silver, platinum, palladium, tungsten or tantalum, rhenium, or a mixture thereof.

7-14. (Canceled)

15. (Currently Amended) A method of diagnosis comprising: ~~administration of~~  
administering a contrast agent comprising solid metal nano-particles having an acoustic impedance above  $35 \cdot 10^5 \text{ g/cm}^2\text{s}$  according to claim 1 to an animal or human patient, and performing an ultrasound imaging examination of the animal or humansubject;

applying an ultrasonic sound wave to the animal or human subject; and  
receiving ultrasound sound wave reflections produced by the ultrasonic wave in the animal or human subject, including ultrasound sound wave reflections from the nano-particles.

16. (Currently Amended) A method of imaging an isolated tissue sample or organ, ~~which method comprises~~ comprising:  
administering the a contrast agent according to claim 1 comprising solid metal

nano-particles having an acoustic impedance above  $35 \cdot 10^5 \text{ g/cm}^2\text{s}$  to said tissue sample or organ; and performing an ultrasound imaging examination thereof  
applying an ultrasonic sound wave to the sample or organ; and  
receiving ultrasound sound wave reflections produced by the ultrasonic wave in the sample or organ, including ultrasound sound wave reflections from the nano-particles.

17. (New) The method of claim 15, wherein the contrasting agent has an acoustic impedance of above  $50 \cdot 10^5 \text{ g/cm}^2\text{s}$ .

18. (New) The method of claim 15, wherein the metal nano-particles have a diameter of between 1 nm and 100 nm.

19. (New) The method of claim 15, wherein the metal nano-particles have a diameter of between 1 nm and 50 nm.

20. (New) The method of claim 15, wherein the metal is non-magnetic.

21. (New) The method of claim 15, wherein the metal is selected from the group consisting of gold, silver, platinum, palladium, tungsten or tantalum, rhenium, or a mixture thereof.

22. (New) The method of claim 15, wherein the metal is a noble metal.

23. (New) The method of claim 15, which further comprises one or more coatings.

24. (New) The method of claim 23, wherein the coating comprises natural or synthetic carbohydrates, synthetic polyaminoacids, or physiologically tolerable synthetic polymers or derivatives thereof.

25. (New) The method of claim 23, wherein the one or more coating comprises a therapeutic agent.

26. (New) The method of claim 15, characterized in that one or more bio-target-specific molecules are attached to the surface of the metal particle.

27. (New) The method of claim 26, wherein the bio-target-specific molecule recognizes a target which is selected from the group consisting of a cellular marker, a pathogen and a foreign and/or toxic agent.

28. (New) The method of claim 26, wherein the bio-target-specific molecule is an antibody or a fragment thereof.

29. (New) The method of claim 15, wherein administering the contrast agent comprises orally administering one of a tablet and a capsule including the contrast agent.

30. (New) The method of claim 15, wherein the metal is rhenium.

31. (New) The method of claim 16, wherein the metal is rhenium.

32. (New) The method of claim 16, wherein the contrasting agent has an acoustic impedance of above  $50 \cdot 10^5 \text{ g/cm}^2\text{s}$ .

33. (New) The method of claim 16, wherein the metal is selected from the group consisting of gold, silver, platinum, palladium, tungsten or tantalum, rhenium, or a mixture thereof.